Course Syllabus – GEOL 4171.001
Hill Country Virtual Field Trip

Instructors: Dr. Mike Read  Dr. R. LaRell Nielson
Email: michael.read@sfasu.edu  rnielson@sfasu.edu
Department: Geology  Geology
Phone: 936-468-2095  936-468-2248
Office Hours: By appointment (Zoom)  By appointment (Zoom)

Course Calendar & Syllabus Information:

This course is a strictly web-based, virtual field trip of the Texas Hill Country and surrounding areas. No laboratory component is required for this course. Weekly course content will be released on Monday mornings throughout the three-week duration of the course – from Monday, October 19th through Friday, November 6th. Each course content module is accompanied by either an online quiz or a discussion post.

For a detailed schedule of all activities and assessments in this course, please refer to the Course Calendar on D2L. There is a mandatory quiz associated with this syllabus, so please read all the information presented herein carefully! Once you’ve done so, please complete the Syllabus & Policy Quiz in order to proceed with the course material.

Note: The Syllabus & Policy Quiz must be completed before any of the course material will be made available. The content modules will remain locked until you complete this quiz!

Course Description:

Hill Country Virtual Field Trip (GEOL 4171): Two credit hours for a three-week virtual field trip exploring the geology of the beautiful Texas Hill Country and surrounding areas. This region has a great diversity of geologic formations, landforms, and natural resources. We will tour the Hill Country from the comfort of our offices, homes, and dorms to see what the geology of central Texas has to offer – including rocks, minerals, fossils, geologic structures, and more!

Internet Access:

This course is delivered strictly online, so be sure your internet connection is as dependable as possible! I understand that there are connectivity issues associated with rural life – trust me, I have HughesNet at home – but this course will require daily internet access. Please keep this in mind.
Program Learning Outcomes:

There are no specific program learning outcomes for this major addressed in this course. It is a general education core curriculum course and/or a service course.

General Education Core Curriculum Objectives & Outcomes:

The student is expected to develop the following core objectives established by the THEC:

• **Critical Thinking Skills** – creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.
• **Communication Skills** – effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.
• **Empirical & Quantitative Skills** – manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts in informed conclusions.
• **Teamwork** – the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.

Student Learning Outcomes:

After successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

**SLO 1** - Demonstrate an understanding of fundamental geologic concepts as it relates to Earth processes and landscape evolution through geologic time. (Critical Thinking, Empirical and Quantitative Skills)

**SLO 2** - Use quantitative reasoning to interpret geologic data (tables, figures, graphs) from primary research, data assimilation and models to assess the differences in competing scientific theories associated with rock formation. (Critical Thinking, Empirical and Quantitative Skills)

**SLO 3** - Demonstrate knowledge on the interdependence of science and technology and the influences geologic reasoning associated with identifiable and testable hypotheses of geologic processes. (Critical Thinking, Teamwork)

**SLO 4** - Critically assess the interrelationships between geologic phenomena and communicate the resulting conclusions in visual and written formats. (Critical Thinking, Communication, Empirical and Quantitative Skills, Teamwork)

**SLO 5** - Demonstrate an understanding of the skills and attitudes necessary for effective teamwork in collaborative learning activities. (Communication, Teamwork)

Schedule of Course Topics:

- **Week One** (assignments due Friday, October 23rd @ 11:59 PM CST)
  - Module 1: Geologic Background
  - Module 2: Trinity River – Crockett, TX
  - Module 3: Blackland Prairie
  - Module 4: Balcones Fault
  - Module 5: Marquez Crater
  - Module 6: Pilot Knob
  - Module 7: Austin Chalk
  - Module 8: Gypsum Quarry
• **Week Two** (assignments due Friday, October 30th @ 11:59 PM CST)
  - Module 9: Stuart City Reef
  - Module 10: San Gabriel River – Leander, TX
  - Module 11: Jacob’s Well
  - Module 12: Pedernales Falls State Park
  - Module 13: Longhorn Cavern
  - Module 14: Wilberns Formation
  - Module 15: Hoover Point
  - Module 16: Hickory Sandstone

• **Week Three** (assignments due Thursday, November 5th @ 11:59 PM CST)
  - Module 17: Llano River – Low Water Crossing
  - Module 18: Llano River Bridge
  - Module 19: Enchanted Rock
  - Module 20: Coal Creek Serpentinite
  - Module 21: Llanite Dike
  - Module 22: Metal Mining in Texas

• **Comprehensive Final Exam** (available Friday, November 6th from 8:00 AM – 11:59 PM CST)

**Online Quizzes:**

Each online quiz will consist of 8 multiple-choice, true/false, fill in the blank, matching, or multi-select questions that will be similar to those seen on subsequent exams. You will have **12 minutes** to complete online quizzes. Please refer to the **Course Calendar** on D2L for a schedule of quizzes. **Each students’ lowest quiz grade will be dropped at the end of the course.**

**Online Discussion Posts:**

Throughout the course of the virtual field trip, you will be prompted to engage in **online discussions** with over a related topic. This may include content from the module, required reading assignments, or outside sources (e.g., videos). Please refer to the **Course Calendar** for a schedule of online discussions. **Each student’s lowest discussion grade will be dropped at the end of the course.**

**Comprehensive Final Exam:**

The comprehensive final exam will be administered through D2L and will consist of **65 questions** and will include a randomized assortment of multiple-choice, true/false, fill in the blank, matching, and multi-select. You will be given **75 minutes** to complete the final exam, which will remain open from **8:00 AM to 11:59 PM on Friday, November 6th.**

It is recommended that you save your responses as you complete each question because of unknown timing of computer or power failure. We cannot help you if questions have not been saved! Once the time allotment for the exam has expired, the exam will be ended and automatically scored.
Late Work:

We will NOT be accepting any late submissions of quizzes and discussions. This is a weekly self-paced course, and each assignment will be due no later than 11:59 AM on Friday (weeks 1 and 2) or Thursday (week 3) of the week it is assigned.

Assessments & Evaluation:

- **13 online quizzes** – 40% of total course grade (lowest grade will be dropped)
- **11 online discussions** – 40% of total course grade (lowest grade will be dropped)
- **1 comprehensive final exam** – 20% of total course grade

**Grade scale:** 90-100 = A; 80-89 = B; 70-79 = C; 60-69 = D; < 60 = F

Academic Integrity (A-9.1):

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

**Definition of Academic Dishonesty** - Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54):**

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

**Students with Disabilities:**

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request
services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to the Office of Disability Services website.

**Student Needs:**

If a lack of basic needs, such as (but not limited to) safe shelter or sufficient groceries, is keeping you from doing your best work and learning effectively, please talk with me or get in touch with the Dean of Student Affairs, Dr. Adam Peck (BPSC 3.105, 936-468-7249, peckae@sfasu.edu). There are many resources available to you on campus, and we are here to help. You will also find a list of student resources posted outside my office door and on D2L.